

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1760

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

HQ, USSOUTHCOM, SCJ2

S E C R E T MONTEVIDEO 2702

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMANN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, UY

SUBJECT: TRENDS IN THE SOUTHERN CONE

REF: (A) STATE 171456, (B) MONTEVIDEO 1805

1. FOLLOWING THE PINCOHET VISIT TO URUGUAY, AND THE BORDABERRY VISIT TO BOLIVIA, WE SAW INDICATIONS THAT THERE WAS DEVELOPING A REGIONAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN, PARTICULARLY HEMISPHERIC, POLICY IN THE SOUTHERN CONE (SEE REFTEL B FOR BROADER DISCUSSION). AS WE ALSO STATED, WE DO NOT HAVE COMPLETE PERSPECTIVE HERE TO PROVIDE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF A FORMAL REGIONAL APPROACH TO A VARIETY OF COMMON INTERESTS, BUT THERE HAS BEEN A STRIKING SIMILARITY AMONG STATEMENTS BY LEADERS OF SOUTHERN CONE NATIONS WITH RESPECT TO INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS (READ HUMAN RIGHTS IN PART, AT LEAST), HEMISPHERIC SECURITY, INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS AND THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM.

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2. YOUR MESSAGE SUGGESTED ADDRESSING, INTER ALIA, SIMILARITIES

AND DIFFERENCES AMONG MILITARY REGIMES, THE EXTENT OF THE COMMUNIST AND SUBVERSIVE THREAT, POLITICAL PROSPECTS, THE HUMAN RIGHTS OUTLOOK AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A WIDENING IDEOLOGICAL GAP BETWEEN THESE COUNTRIES AND THOSE TO THE NORTH. WE SEE ALL OF THESE AS FACETS OF THE SAME PROBLEM. DESPITE DIFFERENCES, A NUMBER OF THE MILITARY REGIMES GREW OUT OF A SIMILAR REACTION TO A PERCEIVED THREAT. THEIR POLITICAL PROSPECTS, THE HUMAN RIGHTS OUTLOOK AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES TO THE NORTH ALL DEPEND UPON WHAT THAT THREAT IS, HOW THEY PERCEIVE IT AND HOW THEY CHOOSE TO DEAL WITH IT.

3. A GROWING NUMBER OF SOUTHERN CONE STATES ATTRIBUTE THE THREAT TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY, COMMUNIST IN THEIR EYES. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT IT IS COMMUNIST MANIPULATION AND INFILTRATION, RATHER THAN LEGITIMATE CONCERNS, WHICH ARE REALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOUNTING ATTACKS AGAINST THEM ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. GIVEN THE MOUNTING HUMAN RIGHTS COMAPIGN, THEIR GROWING ISOLATION, AND BELIEVING THEMSELVES TO BE FACING SIMILAR THREATS AND A COMMON ENEMY, THEY SEE IT AS LOGICAL FOR THEM TO LOOK TO EACH OTHER FOR IDEOLOGICAL REINFORCEMENT AND FOR COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE. THE MORE THAT COMMON BOND IS CEMENTED, THE MORE DIFFICULT WILL BE OUR TASK IN DEALING WITH THEM. PARTICULARLY IF WE APPEAR TO BE UNSYMPATHETIC OR HOSTILE TO THEIR PERCEIVED NEED.

4. THE DEPARTMENT SURELY HAS HAD SUFFICIENT REPORTING ON EACH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY. AS WE SUGGESTED IN REFTEL B, IT IS THE REGIONAL APPROACH WHICH NEEDS THE STUDY YOU ARE NOW UNDERTAKING. THERE IS ONE FACET WHICH WE BELIEVE WARRANTS SPECIAL ATTENTION AND THAT IS THE SOUTHERN CONE'S INCREASINGLY COORDINATED APPROACH TO TERRORISM AND OUR REACTION THERETO. THAT THESE NATIONS FACE A REGIONAL, COORDINATED TERRORIST THREAT IS FACT, NOT FICTION. THE ERP, MIR, ELN, MLN-TUPUMAROS, AND POSSIBLY OTHERS, HAVE REGIONALIZED THEIR OPERATIONS THROUGH THE JCR. THEIR COORDINATION IS NOT ONLY REGIONAL, BUT NOW INTER-CONTINENTAL. THE MOST RATIONAL APPROACH TO DEAL WITH A COORDINATED, REGIONAL ENEMY IS TO ORGANIZE ALONG SIMILAR LINES. THE U.S. HAS LONG URGED THESE COUNTRIES TO INCREASE THEIR COOPERATION FOR SECURITY. NOW THAT THEY ARE DOING SO OUR REACTION SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF OPPROBRIUM. WE MUST CONDEMN ABHORRENT METHODS, BUT WE CANNOT CONDEMN THEIR COORDINATED APPROACH TO COMMON PERCEIVED THREATS OR WE COULD WELL BE EFFECTIVE-

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LY ALIENATED FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WHEN PINOCHET, BORDABERRY AND BANZER SPOKE OF THEIR DEEP CONCERN OVER NEW FORMS OF INTERVENTION IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND OF THE NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE HEMISPHERIC SECURITY, THEY WERE ADDRESSING THESE SAME PROBLEMS--AND TALKING TO US. WE COULD WRITE OFF A URUGUAY OR A PARAGUAY AND LOSE LITTLE BUT VOTES IN THE INTERNATIONAL FORA. WE CANNOT WRITE OFF THE ABC COUNTRIES AND THE REST OF THIS AREA AS WELL. YET CAN WE REALLY SO DIFFERENTIATE AND MAINTAIN OUR OWN

MORAL INTEGRITY? CAN WE, IN EFFECT, ASSUAGE OUR MORALITY BY CASTIGATING URUGUAY AND PARAGUAY, WHERE OUR INTERESTS ARE MINIMAL, WHILE BEING MUCH MORE CAREFUL RE ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL, WHERE THE SITUATION IS WORSE, BUT OUR INTERESTS AND POTENTIAL TO LOSE SOMETHING CORRESPONDINGLY GREATER?
SIRACUSA

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